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Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

March 22, 2020

TO: ALL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, COUNTY EXECUTIVES, COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS,
COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS AND COUNTY CLERKS

FROM: CHERYL SUBLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RACHEL MASSOUD, POLICY ANALYST
ADAM SCHWIEBERT, POLICY ANALYST

RE: STAY AT HOME ORDER AND DETERMINING ESSENTIAL GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS

Stay at Home Order

Today Gov. DeWine announced that Dr. Amy Acton issued a stay at home order. The order will go into effect at 11:59 p.m. on Monday, March 23rd and continue through 11:59 p.m. on Monday, April 6th. A copy of the order can be found [here](#). **CCAO encourages each of you to read [the full order](#)**. To view answers to FAQs regarding the order, click [here](#).

The order addresses many critical services and functions, including health care and public health operations (section 7); human services operations (section 8); essential infrastructure (section 9), and essential governmental functions (section 10), to name just a few areas. We encourage you to read these sections of the order in particular.

In addition, section 10 on page 4 of the order discusses Essential Governmental Functions. The order states:

*Essential Government Functions means all services provided by the State or any municipality, township, **county**, political subdivision, board, commission or agency of government needed to ensure the continuing operation of the government agencies or to provide for or support the health, safety and welfare of the public, and including contractors performing Essential Government Functions. **Each government body shall determine its Essential Government Functions and identify employees and/or contractors necessary to the performance of those functions.** **

It is up to each independently elected county office holder or appointing authority to make these decisions for their office. As commissioners, you will need to make these decisions for your departments and the functions they perform. Also, commissioners will continue to be called upon to show calm, steady leadership to support other appointing authorities in their processes.

Guidance on Determining Essential Governmental Functions

On Friday we sent out the following information (authored by Carri Brown, Administrator, Fairfield County) regarding developing a Continuity of Operations Plan in the county. In these plans, essential functions of county departments are often already developed. Therefore, we are reprinting this material. We welcome examples of your strategy for identifying essential governmental functions and identifying employees and/or



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contractors necessary to perform those functions. Please send your examples to Nedra Benson at nbenson@ccao.org.

In Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government plans, county department leaders will have outlined essential functions of their departments. That is a good place to start if you are refreshing yourself on what is considered essential services. If your plan has not been updated in a while, it is okay. The plan will still be a good place to start your evaluation. It will still give you a reference point for the services that are provided and the priorities that are set forth. Each appointing authority can evaluate their departmental plan and priorities in the context of the current pandemic.

If you were not the one to go through the thinking exercise in creating such a plan, or perhaps you do not have a plan, you can determine essential functions by reexamining the mission, reexamining the services provided to other agencies and the public, identifying supporting critical processes, and considering legal requirements.

The determination can be somewhat difficult because the thought process is not about restoration of services in a period of time following a disaster. It is about continuing basic services in the context of a pandemic. Most people have experience in thinking about restoring services during a weather emergency but have no experience in the provision of services in this environment. The skills are the same for each process, though.

Those skills are calm, steady leadership to review services and develop plans for how they can be provided while keeping people safe. Once you have identified critical, essential services, teams can come together (using technology and social distancing) to create staffing plans, which might not differ greatly from your current situation, depending on how you have already responded to the pandemic.

If you have not already notified essential staff that their roles are essential in times of an emergency, it is a good time to do so. That will help them plan, too. While we are all using alternate schedules, alternate work locations, and technology to provide as many services as possible, things could change.

Many things are changing in this environment.

County leaders are working hard right now and connecting with multiple appointing authorities to organize themselves to provide essential services, such as (but not limited to):

Law Enforcement/Jail Services

Protective Services

Court Services - CPOs and CSPOs

Utilities

JFS benefits

Payroll services

A/P

EMA

Road/Bridge emergency repairs

Administration to keep critical services going

Veteran Services emergency transportation

Some counties have provided an alert to staff so that they can plan if the environment becomes more limiting. An example of such an alert can be found [here](#). *

[Additional Continuity of Operations Plan \(COOP\) Materials](#)

We understand that time is of the essence in making these decisions and you likely do not have time to form an entire COOP. However, we want to provide you with some other resources that can help with the thought process of determining essential functions and might potentially jog your memory.

[Guiding Questions to ask when developing a COOP](#)

[Worksheets for planning a COOP](#)

CCAO will continue to provide you with resources as they become available. Please contact Rachel Massoud, policy analyst, at rmassoud@ccao.org or Adam Schwiebert, policy analyst, at aschwiebert@ccao.org with questions.

Visit <https://ccao.org/resources/coronavirus-updates/> for updates, FAQs and previous memos. As a reminder, current information from the Ohio Department of Health can be found at www.coronavirus.ohio.gov.

**emphasis added for the purposes of this memo*